

this legislation, we're going to say we're going to require medical school education to have education teaching all doctors to recognize this.

That is what is important in this legislation, and I am pleased to ask my colleagues that they ought to support this legislation so that we can finally have justice for all in health care in this country.

□ 1100

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, this week, it is still uncertain as to whether we are going to have an opportunity to vote on a health care proposal before we go home for the August recess. And I would just suggest, Madam Speaker, that what we do is ensure that we have absolute transparency, the capability of every Member to look at whatever bill comes to this floor—we have been told that the bill may be in excess of 1,000 pages—that we have an opportunity to have a full debate and full amendments to be debated on the floor.

And why do I say this? Because many people would say that would be what is to be expected. Unfortunately, over the last several months, we have had an experience in this House in which we have had major pieces of legislation brought to this floor, in some cases the bill itself with very little notice, in other cases huge 300-page amendments being dropped on us at the last minute.

We have had some suggest that it is unnecessary for Members of Congress to read the bill or have their staffs read the bill or understand the parts of the bill; rather, we are told, "just trust us." Well, I remember Ronald Reagan's very important admonition, which was "trust, but verify."

If we are being asked to alter approximately 18 percent of the entire United States economy, if we are being asked to change in fundamental ways the delivery of health care to the men, women and children of this country, if we are being told that what we are going to do is going to inalterably change Medicare and Medicaid, if we are being told that what we are embarking on this week is to fundamentally change the manner in which men, women and children of this country receive their health care, if we are to be told that we must make a decision this week as to what the relationship between the doctor and the patient ought to be, if we are being told that we will have to make choices as to whether or not the government shall insert itself between the doctor and the patient, if we are being told that the President believes that there are doctors—the generalization was most doctors would require a tonsillectomy for a young person rather than continue treatment

of a cheaper kind to take care of sore throats, if we are being told that we have to review the entire health care system of the United States, compare it to Canada, compare it to England, compare it to France, compare it to Sweden, compare it to the ideal, if we are being told that this week we have to make the decision as to whether or not the program we put forward will have government decide whether a 100-year-old woman who is in extraordinarily good health but needs a pacemaker ought to instead be told by the government that merely she should take a pain pill—as the President suggested on television not too long ago—then maybe we owe it to the American people to give ourselves sufficient time. Rather than have some sort of artificial deadline, maybe we ought to take the time to go back to our districts and present the arguments to our constituents and at least give them an opportunity to tell us in our town hall meetings, tell us in our tele-town halls, tell us in our meetings with various groups as to what they think ought to be done.

Why would we have a rush to judgment here, other than the fact that we have an August recess, other than the fact that the President said that we must pass it by a date certain? Shouldn't we take the time to do the work that the American people expect us of, particularly when it deals with something so precious, so personal, so important as their health?

And so I hope that, rather than meet some artificial deadline, we will take the time to allow the American people to see the bill in all of its glory, to see its good points and its bad points, to see whether we ought to change it, alter it in any way, and then come back and make a decision here for the American people. There are very few issues that are as fundamentally important as this issue. Let's make sure we do it right.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, it is an honor for me to take the floor after PATRICK KENNEDY from Rhode Island, who, along with his father, Senator EDWARD KENNEDY, have devoted so much of their careers, their emotions, their passion to resolving the health care problems in this country.

And as we talk about health care and reforming our system, we talk a lot about billions and billions of dollars, we talk about government agencies, we talk about the politics of it, but at its core this issue isn't about any of those things. This is about human beings. This is about men, women and their families and trying to help them deal with health care crises, wellness issues, things that every American has to deal with.

Yesterday, in southern Indiana, right across from my district, a subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee held a field hearing in which we were able to see the face of this issue, three people who came before us to tell their stories about how the health care system in America has failed them.

One of them was a constituent from my district, Patricia Reilling. Patricia is a small businessperson. For 20 years she was insured under a small business policy by the same company. She paid her bills every month religiously. The only claim she ever made was for some pain killers for a back injury. And then, last year she was found to have breast cancer. She had a double mastectomy. She contracted a staph infection while she was in the hospital. And while all that is going on, she received notice from her insurance company that they were not going to renew her policy as of June 30 of this year. She is still fighting that staph infection. She is unable to work. And she is still fighting without insurance because the only insurance available to her now is far beyond her means to pay. She is the real person, and someone whose situation could be replicated in any household across this country if we don't do something about reforming our insurance system.

Another woman who was at the hearing yesterday was Ms. Beaton from Dallas, Texas. Ms. Beaton is 59. She had an individual policy. She also contracted breast cancer, had a double mastectomy, except before she could have that operation the insurance company rescinded her policy, basically said we know we insured you, but because there was a notation in something in a medical chart years ago that referred to a skin issue—namely, pimples—and somebody misinterpreted it as saying it was precancerous, which the doctor denied, we are not covering your cancer treatment. Fortunately, Congressman BARTON from Texas intervened on her behalf and was able to eventually get her policy reinstated. But by the time it was, her tumors had grown by more than 300 percent in size, and the treatment that she got was vastly more complicated and more expensive than it ever needed to be. These are the faces of the insurance crisis, the health crisis that we face, and we have to change our system.

Fourteen thousand Americans lose their health insurance every day. It could be any one of us. And you know what? In that situation that we heard about yesterday, that has recurred. Three insurance companies testified before Congress a month ago; three insurance companies rescinded 20,000 policies over the last 5 years, did what they did to Ms. Beaton. They saved \$300 million by doing that, but that was only the cost of the care they denied, the claims they refused to pay, not the prospective cost of covering and treating all of those illnesses, which would have been in the billions of dollars.